

The Resurrections (4)

The Miraculous Events Surrounding the Cross

([Matthew 27:45-53](#))

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[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 04-18-10)

The Doctrine of the Resurrections

Six miracles

1) Supernatural Darkness

[Matthew 27:45 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.

When Jesus was born, the night sky around Bethlehem was filled with supernatural light as “**the glory of the Lord shone around**” the shepherds in the field ([Luke 2:9](#)). John spoke of Jesus as “**the light of men,**” and “**the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man,**” ([John 1:4, 9](#)). Jesus spoke of Himself as “**the light of the world**” ([John 8:12](#); cf. [John 12:35-36](#)).

But the **first miraculous sign** that accompanied Jesus’ death was not glorious light but dread darkness. ([Matthew 27:45](#))

From the sixth hour (noon), when the sun is at its zenith, supernatural **darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.)**. Jesus’ crucifixion had begun at the **third hour**, or 9:00 A.M. ([Mark 15:25](#)), and when the darkness began He had been on the cross for three hours.

2) Sovereign Departure ([Matthew 27:46-49](#))

A second miracle occurred at **about the ninth hour**, or three o'clock in the afternoon, through an inexplicable event that might be called **sovereign departure**, as somehow **God** was separated from **God**. At that time **Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”** As **Matthew** explains, the Hebrew **Eli** (**Mark** uses the Aramaic form, “*Eloi*,” [Mark 15:34](#)) means, **My God**, and **lama sabachthani** means, **why hast Thou forsaken Me?**

3) Self-Giving Death ([Matthew 27:50](#))

A third miracle of the cross was Christ’s self-giving death, the Son’s willing sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world in obedience to His Father’s will. The fact that **Jesus cried out again with a loud voice** (cf. [Matthew 27:46](#); [Mark 15:37](#); [Luke 23:46](#)) demonstrated considerable physical strength, even after the beatings, scourging, crown of thorns, nail wounds, and hanging in agony for several hours.

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4) Sanctuary Devastation ([Matthew 27:51a](#))

The fourth miracle that occurred during the crucifixion was the divine devastation of the sanctuary, as **the veil of the temple was torn in two**. *Naos* (temple) does not refer to the Temple as a whole but to the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt in His symbolic presence. A huge woven **veil** separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple, and **Josephus** the historian reports that this massive curtain was predominantly blue and was ornately decorated.

5) Soil Disturbance ([Matthew 27:51b](#))

A fifth miracle that occurred during the crucifixion was a supernaturally caused earthquake. Immediately after Jesus died and the Temple veil was torn in two, **the earth shook; and the rocks were split**. Making still another statement about His Son to the world, and especially to His chosen people, the Father brought a devastating earthquake to Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

Again the Old Testament gives insight into the significance of the occurrence. When God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai, **“the whole mountain quaked violently”** ([Exodus 19:18](#)), and when He appeared to Elijah on a mountain, **“a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake”** ([1 Kings 19:11](#)).

6) Subduing Death ([Matthew 27:52-53](#))

The sixth miracle at the crucifixion was closely related to the previous one, as the supernatural earthquake not only gave the world a foretaste of divine judgment but also caused many **tombs** to be **opened**. The significant miracle of that event, however, was not the mere opening of tombs, as could occur during any earthquake. The great miracle was that **many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**.

After the veil of the Temple was torn in two and the earth around Jerusalem was violently shaken, the Lord selectively **raised** the **bodies** of certain believers who had died. [Matthew](#) points out that **many**, but not all, **bodies of the saints** who had died **were resurrected**, making clear that this **resurrection** was divinely restricted to a limited number of believers. They had trusted in God during the time **before and under the Old Covenant**, and some of those bodies may have been in their graves many hundreds of years.

When Jesus died, their spirits came from the abode of righteous spirits and were joined with their glorified bodies that came out of the graves. This was full and final resurrection and glorification, making this miracle another foretaste of God’s sovereign work during the end times, when **“all the dead in Christ shall rise”** ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](#));([Matthew 27:52-53](#)).

It is important to note that the phrase **and coming out of the tombs** should be followed by a period, indicating the close of the sentence. **After His resurrection** begins a new sentence and introduces a distinct truth, namely, that those select resurrected saints then **entered the holy city and appeared to many**.

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Those saints did not appear in Jerusalem until after the Lord's own resurrection, because He was divinely appointed to be **“the first fruits of those who are asleep”** ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)). And just as Christ Himself appeared after His resurrection only to those who already believed in Him, it would also seem that the **many** to whom the resurrected saints appeared were all believers. We are not told what they said to their brethren in **the holy city**, but their appearance in bodily form not only testified to Christ's resurrection but also to God's promise to raise all those who put their trust in Christ ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#); [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#)).

Through those **six miracles** the Father was saying that the cross is the only hope for eternal life. When one's sin is carried away by Christ's atoning death, the wrath of God is appeased for that believer, and he is delivered from the death and condemnation that the Lord endured on his behalf. For those who believe in the Son, access to God is open wide, and they are assured of living in His eternal and indestructible kingdom in eternal and indestructible bodies.